Who Runs the Library: Roles & Responsibilities in Wisconsin's Public Libraries

Responsibility	Library Board	Library Director	Municipality	Friends & Foundations
Administration	Generally oversee the administration of the library and appoint a head librarian (director) who administers the daily operation of the library.	Administer daily operation of the library, including maintenance of library facilities and equipment. Advise the board and provide support to community groups.	Appoint trustees who serve on the library board.	Support quality library service in the community through fundraising, volunteerism, and serving as advocates for the library.
Policy	Adopt written policies to govern the operation and program of the library.	Apprise library board of need for new policies, as well as policy revisions. Implement the policies adopted by the library board.	Support the policies of the library as adopted by the library board.	Support the policies of the library as adopted by the library board.
Personnel	Recruit, hire, and supervise an appropriately certified library director. Help determine and advocate for competitives staff salaries and benefits.	Hire, train, supervise, and schedule all other library personnel. Keep library board informed of important issues and consult with the board before making significant personnel decisions.	Offer assistance to the library director and board regarding state and federal employment laws. Maintain payroll. All library staff are municipal employees.	Communicate with library staff through the library director or the director's specified point of contact.
Planning	Assist in the formulation and adoption of a strategic plan that has implementation and evaluation components.	Coordinate and implement a strategic plan with library board, Friends, library foundation, staff and community.	Provide input into the library's strategic plan and support its implementation.	Provide input into the library's strategic plan and support its implementation.
Budgets	Seek adequate funds to carry out library operations. Assist in the preparation and presentation of the annual budget.	Oversee the library budget and prepare the annual budget and reports as required by the board.	Appropriate an annual budget with enough funds for the library to successfully carry out operations according to its approved mission and plans.	Conduct fundraising to support the library's mission and plans.
Expenditures	Audit and approve all library expenditures (as well as lands, buildings, money, and property).	Order materials and supplies within the library's approved budget. Submit invoices to the board for monthly audit and approval.	Act as custodian of most library funds and appropriations; pay library board approved library expenditures. Assist with purchasing, facilities, etc.	Support the library by providing financial support for priorities set by the library board and staff that may fall outside the municipal budget.
Meetings	Participate in all board meetings. Appoint a liaison to the Friends Board and become a member of the Friends.	Participate in library board and Friends meetings. Ensure that there is a liaison from the board to the Friends and vice versa.	Maintain no more than one appointment to the library board.	Maintain a liaison to the library board.
Networking	Join the Wisconsin Library Trustees and Friends (WLTF), a division of WLA, to network with others and learn more about policies, operations, and advocacy.	Build relationships with municipal board and staff, Friends; educate these groups about the value of public libraries; encourage membership in professional organizations.	Stay informed of library issues at local, state, and federal levels. Include the library director in department head meetings and community activities.	Join the Wisconsin Library Trustees and Friends (WLTF), a division of WLA, to network with others and learn more about supporting libraries.